

Newsday

9/17/96

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OBITUARIES

McGeorge Bundy, 77, Adviser to Kennedy, Johnson



McGeorge Bundy

THE WASHINGTON POST

McGeorge Bundy, 77, the White House national security adviser in the Kennedy and Johnson administrations who was one of the primary architects of the U.S. military buildup and commitment to the war in Vietnam, died yesterday at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston after a heart attack. He was stricken over the weekend at his home in Manchester-by-the-Sea, north of Boston.

Mr. Bundy, a former dean of the faculty of arts and sciences at Harvard University, came to Washington in 1961 at the beginning of John F. Kennedy's presidency, and he soon became the primary White House foreign affairs adviser, a position he held throughout the Kennedy administration and into the presidency of Lyndon B. Johnson.

He was one of the leading men in a corps of academics and intellectuals Kennedy brought to Washington. When he left the White House staff in 1966 to become president of the Ford Foundation, he was the last member of the Kennedy White House to go.

"He was the brightest light in that glittering constellation around the president," David Halberstam wrote in "The Best and the Brightest," his book about the policy-makers who led

the United States into the war in Vietnam.

"Keeping the papers moving, reminding the President when a decision was coming up . . . protecting the President against people who wanted his time but were not worthy of it, making sure that people who needed his time got it. . . . At meetings the President would ask him to sum up, and then, looking for all the world as if he had not even paid attention, Bundy would instantly give the quickest, most incisive, most complete summing up imaginable."

At the White House, Mr. Bundy operated out of a tiny basement room in the West Wing that was so dreary that Kennedy once suggested to Mr. Bundy's wife that she find some pictures to brighten the walls. But from that setting, Mr. Bundy was said to have presided over a miniature State Department, complete with its own regional assistant secretaries and an international economic expert.

In the Kennedy administration, he was one of a triumvirate — the others being Defense Secretary Robert McNamara and Secretary of State Dean Rusk — who lunched weekly with the president.

From 1979 to 1989, Mr. Bundy was a professor of history at New York University. From 1990 to 1993, he worked at the Carnegie Corp. of New York.